



## Agriculture

During the 2021 legislative session, the General Assembly considered several measures related to agriculture including animal welfare, economic development, the Department of Agriculture, and other agriculture-related bills.

### Animal Welfare

The General Assembly passed three bills concerning animal welfare in 2021. *House Bill 21-1102* creates the Pet Store Consumer Protection Act, which prohibits new pet stores licensed after July 1, 2021 from selling cats or dogs. The bill also requires existing pet stores to include and post the purchase price and breeder license numbers for all animals being sold, and to disclose any federal or state violations received by any associated animal breeder, broker, or transporter within the previous two years to prospective customers.

*House Bill 21-1160* requires each animal shelter and pet animal rescue in the state to provide timely veterinary care and address the behavioral needs of any cats or dog in its custody. The bill also requires that animal shelters and pet animal rescues only dispose of animals through adoption, returning the animal to the original owner, or transferring the animal to another organization if the animal is deemed healthy and safe.

*Senate Bill 21-135* prohibits the use of certain animals in traveling animal acts and creates a misdemeanor charge and fine for any

violations. Some of the animals that cannot perform in a traveling show under the bill include: felines other than domestic cats, nonhuman primates, and wild canines other than domestic dogs. The bill does not include the use of animals in stationary exhibits, wildlife sanctuaries, or non-mobile facilities such as zoos or aquariums.

*House Bill 21-1062* would have allowed a person to sell, without license, regulation, or inspection by a public health agency, certain animals or share of the meat of an animal under certain conditions. The bill was postponed indefinitely.

### Economic Development

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted agricultural economic development across the state. In response to the pandemic, the General Assembly considered numerous bills supporting agricultural economic development. *Senate Bill 21-235* transfers \$3.0 million to the Agricultural Value-Added Cash Fund in the Colorado Department of Agriculture (CDA) to support the Advancing Colorado's Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Program (ACRE<sup>3</sup>). ACRE<sup>3</sup> provides funding and technical support to Colorado producers for renewable and energy efficiency projects, which aim to cut energy costs and create new markets for agriculturally-derived energy and fuels. *Senate Bill 21-229* creates the

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rural jump-start zone grant program within the Office of Economic Development and International Trade, which awards grants to new businesses located in rural-jump start zones in Colorado.

*Senate Bill 21-203* transfers \$2.5 million to the Agricultural Markets Division within CDA to increase marketing opportunities for Colorado's farmers, ranchers, and food companies, and develop of Colorado agricultural-related business ventures through the Colorado Proud Program.

Finally, *House Bill 21-1262* creates the Agricultural Events Relief Program in CDA, which provides funding for the Colorado State Fair and National Western Stock Show for 2021.

### Colorado Department of Agriculture

The General Assembly considered and enacted four bills considering CDA in 2021. *House Bill 21-1242* creates the agricultural drought and climate resilience office within CDA. The office will advise the Commissioner of Agriculture, the Colorado Agriculture Value-Added Development Board, and other state agencies on the impact of agricultural drought to state climate policies and programs.

*Senate Bill 21-248* creates the Colorado Agricultural Future Loan Program in CDA. This loan program is authorized to provide loans for farm-to-market infrastructure to qualified farmers, ranchers and businesses.

*House Bill 21-1181* creates the Colorado Soil Health Program and the Soil Health Advisory Committee in CDA. The Colorado Soil Health Program is required to establish a grant program, a system for monitoring the economic and environmental benefits of soil health practices, a state soil health inventory, a soil health testing program, and other programs

that promote soil health practices. The Commissioner of Agriculture is required to appoint at least nine members to the Soil Health Advisory Committee, which is required to review any grants proposed by CDA concerning soil health, and to make recommendations to CDA about the development of the Soil Health Program.

*House Bill 21-1045* creates the Emergency Invasive Pest Response Fund in CDA to implement emergency measures to control or eradicate invasive pests in Colorado.

### Other Bills

The General Assembly passed *House Bill 21-1301*, which addresses cannabis outdoor cultivation measures. These measures include: how medical and retail marijuana cultivation license owners may handle any adverse weather events that impact outdoor growing, cross pollination between marijuana and industrial hemp, and preparing the state in the event of the federal legalization of marijuana.

*House Bill 21-1180* creates the biomass utilization grant program in the Colorado State Forest Service. These grants will be awarded to projects in Colorado that demonstrate the benefits of using biomass for wildfire prevention, mitigation, energy generation, and agriculture from biochar. The bill also requires the Colorado State Forest Service to annually submit a report describing each project that received funding to the House Agriculture, Livestock, and Water Committee and to the Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee.